

Switch on lite

SWCHS Parent Newsletter



From the Head

Dear Parents & Carers,

This edition of Switch-on Lite showcases County High at its most vibrant: excelling in Drama, Sport, Music, academic subjects and embracing difference.

I'm sure that, like me, you were immensely impressed with the professional production values and excellent performances in 'The Wizard of Oz' and are excited to chart the progress of the U15 rugby team as they compete in the semi-finals of the National Schools' Bowl.

An area that we need to improve on, however, is associated with how we, as a school, treat the wider environment. We have been addressing this matter this term by looking at energy saving approaches to our use of electricity and central heating, and also examining our use of single-use plastics. Our student voice representatives have been working with the school catering team to find approaches and products that can reduce the amount of plastic packaging we use. We will let you know more about the proposed changes to packaging in the spring.

Have a wonderful March.

Caroline Derbyshire

Fake News:

We have become aware of an increasing amount of mis-information which is generated by parents, and sometimes students, on social media which is then 'communicated' as fact. While some examples of this cause a few wry smiles in the office at school, others are more concerning and have potentially serious consequences. Please think very carefully before you post or discuss information about the school on social media platforms. The only reliable source of information about news and events at SWCHS is the school itself and is regularly communicated to parents and carers via Parentmail, letters home, newsletters, the school's website and our official social media accounts. Following recent gossip on Facebook, we wish to clarify that the Year 11 prom is **not** cancelled (and never has been) - final payments for tickets and for the year book are due today, Friday 2nd March.

Wizard of Oz:

Over 100 SWCHS students, from Years 7-13, performed in this year's fantastic whole school production of 'The Wizard of Oz.' 22 students played in the orchestra and a further 16 worked backstage.



Hannah O'Sullivan (Year 10) played the role of Dorothy, Tom Rowntree (Year 13) the Scarecrow, Alex Holder (Year 13) the Cowardly Lion and Haydn

Watts (Year 12) played the Tin Man. All staff and students involved have been in rehearsals since September and everyone has committed so much time and energy to ensure the show was a success. Hannah Benjamin (Head of Drama) said, "The whole production has highlighted just how much talent there is at SWCHS, both on and off the stage. Directing the show has been an absolute joy, due to the energy and passion from all of the students involved. We are extremely proud of the whole team."

Photos supplied by Carmel/Jane Photography



Chinese school visit:

In the fortnight before February half term, 180 students from our link school in Beijing spent time with us in school. The Chinese students were paired up with SWCHS students who will be travelling to China during the Easter holiday this year and also the group who are going in 2019. As well as being together in lessons, the students spent lunchtimes involved in cultural activities: the Chinese students taught us dragon dancing, paper cutting, calligraphy and gave musical performances. There were also basketball matches and the Chinese visitors enjoyed attending 'The Wizard of Oz' production. The Chinese students were accompanied by

teachers from their school in Beijing who spent time observing SWCHS teachers during lessons. All our visitors said that they had had a great time with us and have made some good friendships. We are very much looking forward to visiting their school as part of our China trips this year and next.



SWCHS Pride Day:

On the 9th February, Saffron Walden County High School's LGBTQ+ Allies group hosted their 3rd annual Pride Day which has become an integral part of the school's identity. Rainbow cakes were on sale in the canteen, with a bake sale in the Sixth Form and a bazaar in Lower School. All donations are going towards helping LGBTQ+ students. A Stonewall Inspirational speaker, Darren Williams, came to speak to both teachers and students about his experiences along with two former SWCHS students. It ensured that all students, no matter what their gender/race/sexuality, could get involved on the day. SWCHS is a Stonewall Bronze Award School Champion, constantly striving for equality and fairness for all.



Sports News

Rugby:

The U15 Rugby team have progressed to the semi-finals of the 2017/18 National Schools Bowl. A fantastic achievement for the boys. 128 school teams entered the competition, run by England RFU, and the final will be played at Worcester Warriors Premiership ground.

The Year 10 boys have successfully beaten teams from Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and most recently Severn Vale School from Gloucestershire. The Quarter Final finished 17-46 to SWCHS, it was a fantastic win with some great rugby. Tries came from Ryan Curtis, Oliver Keys, Alex Keys (3), Luhan Bely, and Beau Longaretti with goals kicked by Morgan Evans. They now look forward to a home semi-final against Emmanuel College from Newcastle on Tuesday 6th March, kick off at 2.15pm. We wish the very best of luck to the team!



Congratulations to the U14 Boys' Rugby team who recently won their Essex Cup quarter final 41-33 against Woodlands School.

Netball:

There was a fantastic but very cold afternoon of Netball against Stephen Perse for the U14 A,B,C & D teams earlier this month. The A team struggled to get their shots on target which led to a 23-12 defeat. The B team remain unbeaten winning 13-19 and the C team were successful winning their match 6-17. The D team's game was incredibly tight but finished 8-5 to Stephen Perse.

The U14A team also played against JFAN this month winning 34-11. Great team performances.

The U16 Netball squad have made it to the semi-final of the Essex Cup Plate competition, beating Robert Clack 31-6. The team are looking forward to the semi-finals.

Hockey:

The U14 Girls' Hockey team continue their quest for the Essex Cup with convincing wins against Southend and Sweyne Park. They now go through to the semi-finals and are firmly focused on the prize!

The U16 team were also successful in their Essex Cup match against King John School, winning their match 8-0. Congratulations to both teams.



Ski Trip 2018:

140 students and 15 staff spent their half term in the Aosta Valley at the Gressoney ski resort. The whole group enjoyed a great week of quality skiing conditions, with six hours of skiing a day on offer, and apres-ski evenings consisting of ice skating, pizza and Championship League Football accompanied with as much pasta as they could eat - who could ask for more!. A hugely successful week with no ski injuries to speak of. Thank you to all members of staff.



Economics:

Early in February a group of Year 13 students went on a three day Economics and Business field trip to Brussels and enjoyed a packed and varied programme. For many the highlight was a morning at the European Parliament, where they watched a debate in action, met Geoffrey van Orden, one of the region's MEPs, and heard about the workings of the European Parliament and some of the consequences of Brexit.

Other activities included a globalisation role-play, organised by Oxfam, a tour round Coca Cola's factory, a visit to a large recycling plant and a chance to try their hand at making chocolates at an artisan chocolatier. The trip ended with an afternoon at one of the

EU's European Schools, where we had lively discussions with some of their Sixth Form students again on Brexit, hosted by our former colleague, Mr Vaughan-Shaw, who now teaches there.



Saffron Walden Music Festival:

The sixth annual Saffron Walden Music Festival attracted over 200 entries this year. The Festival began on Friday evening with the Brass Section, adjudicated by Nigel Black, Head of Brass at the Royal College of Music in London and Principal Horn of the Philharmonia Orchestra. First to play on the Saffron Hall stage was 5-year old Archie Pannell with his cornet in the Grade 1-2 class, who gave a confident performance of "Tennessee Rag". Nigel Black commented very positively on the confidence and enthusiasm of the younger performers. The class was won by Mara Roberts who played the theme from "Blackadder" flawlessly on her euphonium. The festival continued into Saturday with piano, guitar, woodwind and vocal performances and the final Winners' Concert, on Sunday, was an amazing showcase for the talent which had been seen over the course of the Festival. It was a joyous celebration of the young musicians' achievements. After much deliberation by the adjudicators, the Mullucks Wells trophy was awarded to Josh Lucas for his technically accomplished yet passionate unaccompanied performance of the Prelude from Suite number 3 by Bach on the cello.



Photo supplied by kingeng@aol.com

Maths :

Congratulations to the Year 10 Maths team who competed in the Linton heat of the Maths Feast competition earlier this month. Over the course of four rounds covering geometry, logic, spatial awareness and arithmetic accuracy, Amy Dunn, Ursula Gerhard, Adam Johnson and Thomas Swiecichowski performed brilliantly, achieving respectable scores in all areas and even topping the leader board in round 1. Well done to the team.

